

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00506 270715Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 /038 W

-----048472 270719Z /15

R 241402Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4801
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ASEC, OGEN
SUBJECT: BURGLARIES OF ARAB DIPLOMATIC RESIDENCES

1. BASED ON EXPERIENCE OF LAST TWO YEARS, BURGLARIES OF DIPLOMATIC RESIDENCES SEEM TO BE A STANDARD FEATURE ENLIVENING OTHERWISE DISMAL PRAGUE WINTERS. UNTIL THIS WEEK, HOWEVER, ONLY LOSSES HAVE BEEN PROPERTY, PRIMARILY ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT AND OTHER SMALL HIGH-VALUE ITEMS. SITUATION CHANGED WITHIN PAST WEEK WHEN CARETAKER AT LIBYAN EMBASSY DISCOVERED BURGLARS IN ACTION AND WAS FATALLY ATTACKED.

2. ARAB EMBASSIES HAVE SEEMED TO BE FAVORITE TARGETS THIS YEAR, AS EGYPTIAN, SYRIAN, LEBANESE, AND LIBYANS HAVE RECENTLY EXPERIENCED BREAK-INS. FOLLOWING LIBYAN RESIDENCE HOMICIDE, ARAB AMBASSADORS MET TOGETHER FEBRUARY 21ST AND DECIDED TO MAKE JOINT DEMAND TO MFA FOR INCREASED PROTECTION. SINCE FEBRUARY 22, WE HAVE NOTED UNIFORMED POLICE ON POINT DUTY IN FRONT OF ARAB EMBASSIES.

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3. WE UNDERSTAND EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR CHOUCRI--WHO IS TIRED, SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK IN MID-1977, AND WOULD LIKE TO RETURN HOME IN ANY CASE--HAS SUGGESTED TO CAIRO THAT GOE MIGHT WANT TO RECALL HIM AND CARRY FORWARD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS HERE AT LEVEL OF CHARGE D' AFFAIRES.

4. THIS WINTER SO FAR ONLY ONE BUILDING HOUSING US PERSONNEL

HAS BEEN BURGLED. THAT INCIDENT INVOLVED ONLY APARTMENT OF
CZECH CITIZEN ON GROUND FLOOR OF HOUSE OCCUPIED BY OUR GSO.
GSO QUARTERS WERE NOT ENTERED.

5. COMMENT: ALL EVIDENCE WE HAVE SUGGESTS THAT THESE BURGLARIES
ARE PURELY CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES, NOT SPONSORED BY GOC SECURITY.
SECRET POLICE ARE OFTEN SUSPECTED OF ENTERING DWELLINGS OF
ABSENT NON-COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS, BUT THEY TEND TO BE REASONABLY
SUBTLE AND CONFINE PILFERAGE TO PETTY ITEMS, SUCH
AS LIQUOR AND SWEETS.
DECONTROL FOUR YEARS AFTER RECEIPT.
FROWICK

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